

When You're Hijacked, You're Not Fully Present

Introduction

There are two types of hijack – hard and soft. During hijack our thoughts are not productive. There are many productive thoughts – what we need to do that day, what to buy from the store, who to call, thinking about how to repair something that is broken.

One of the mind's jobs is to solve problems. The problem can be from years ago. This is why the mind will bring up many random problems/situations from years past. Most of the time when the mind brings up random past events, the mind is mostly re-spinning 'the same old song' with very little productive help. Thinking is not the problem. What our thoughts are can be a problem.

Our mind helps us so very much. Our mind can also get in the way of living a life fully alive. At different times in the day, take notice of the thoughts in your mind. Are the thoughts productive? Helpful for you?

Soft Hijack: We Cannot Work On A Problem Until We Recognize There Is A Problem

If we pay attention, we can know what our mind is thinking. Thoughts are going on and on. Our mind is coming up with thought after thought after thought. We're not coming up with most of these thoughts. When this happens, it's like another person is talking to us. We cannot know what the other person will say next. We don't know when the other person will stop talking.

When we notice our mind is talking, there is a 'me' that notices the mind is talking. This me is our self. When our mind is talking, the mind 'has the microphone' and me/our self is listening. If our mind is productive, then these thoughts are useful and good to have. *If our mind is looping again and again about something or thinking about something that is not productive, then this is soft hijack.* Me/our self is more active when the mind is not actively generating thoughts.

Almost everyone is being softly hijacked most all of the day. Ever wonder why so many people on earth are living in selfishness and fear? They are being hijacked almost all day long. And you and I are very, very likely in that category.

Hard hijack is easily recognized as a problem. Soft hijack is when non-productive thinking is happening. (Productive thinking is needed and welcomed.) A problem cannot be solved until it's recognized to be a problem. Soft hijack is not usually recognized as a problem. During soft hijack your body and emotions may or may not be contributing to the soft hijack.

The next section of this article will address hard hijack; the type of hijack that we're very familiar with and the type of hijack where our worst behavior and most damaging actions come from.

Hard Hijack: Amygdala Hijack

If you're experiencing the following three points, you're in hard/amygdala hijack. (The first footnote at the end of this article will further address amygdala hijack.)

1. Your thoughts are continuing to loop and loop and loop. You can't get away from the train of thoughts.
2. Your emotions get involved as your thoughts are continuing. Your emotions are becoming more and more troubling. You have the thought train going on and on, and now your emotions are going in a direction that is also very troubling.
3. Your body is releasing adrenaline and cortisol as a response to the agitating and upsetting thoughts and emotions. Your body and mind and emotions are now in amygdala hijack. All three parts, body, mind and emotions, are playing off each other and your thoughts and feelings are continuing to go in a negative/troubling direction and your body is hyped up on cortisol and adrenaline (sympathetic dominance).

Bad Remedies For Hijack

1. Drink alcohol.
2. Take drugs.
3. Eat and eat.
4. Express the very troubling feelings by ranting directly at another person.
5. Blaming, shaming or feeling a victim.

Between Bad and Good Remedies For Hijack

1. Distract yourself with TV or something else.

Good Remedies For Hijack

1. Talk with a friend.
2. Take a walk or move your body in a way that you don't strain yourself.
3. Journal/write to bring what's inside onto paper or onto a computer. This is a way of releasing, and discovering what is deeper than the current hijacked thoughts and feelings.
4. Release your emotions by crying or screaming, though not at another person.
5. Regulate your breathing. The rest of this article addresses different ways to regulate your breathing.

Regulate Your Breathing

All of the good remedies are good to do. Regulating your breathing is a core remedy to lessen the hijacked state and is often hard to do. Regulating your breathing is a direct way to help your body, mind and emotions to go from sympathetic dominance to parasympathetic dominance.

(There are many other articles where I've addressed breathing. The second footnote at the end of this article provides a link for these additional articles about breathing.)

Tips About Regulating Your Breathing

1. *Your abdomen moves on every breath. When your abdomen moves with breathing, you're going in the direction of calming down (parasympathetic dominance). When your abdomen doesn't move, you're going in the direction of being more stressed (sympathetic dominance).*
2. I recommend breathing in through your nose. Breathing in through your nose helps clean your brain (thoughts) more than breathing in through your mouth.
3. I recommend breathing out through your mouth. By breathing out through your mouth, there is a wider and easier flow out (the letting go part of breathing).
4. There are different amounts of time to inhale, hold the breath and exhale in the following breathing techniques. Find which of these different breathing techniques you prefer.
5. *My recommendation of your abdomen moving on every breath and of breathing in through your nose and breathing out through your mouth applies to the first three breathing techniques and not to the last breathing technique (#4).*
6. In all of the following breathing techniques, your mind will have attention to your breathing and to your body (chest and abdomen). This helps to interrupt your mind's non-productive thinking.

7. In all of these breathing techniques, you'll lose track of your breathing. When you notice that you're not working with your breathing, gently come back to your breath. Don't reprimand yourself. Your mind will naturally wander.

Breathing Technique #1: Longer Exhalations Than Inhalations

This is the most simple of the breathing techniques. During exhalation, your body is letting go of what it doesn't want. This is the part of the breath cycle where you can slowly let go of the power behind your unwanted thoughts and unwanted emotions. Use the exhalation time as the time to release the energy that is keeping you in soft or hard hijack.

When your inhalations are longer than your exhalations, you're giving your body, mind and emotions more energy to stay in hijack. This is why exhalation is longer than inhalation. By exhaling for a longer time than inhaling, you're slowly letting go of more and more of the non-productive thought stream and any accompanying emotional and physical excessive and anti-productive energy.

This is the easiest breathing technique to do when you're hijacked. When your mind and emotions are calm enough for a little more attention to your breathing, you can choose between the following three patterned ways of breathing.

Breathing Technique #2: 4-7-8 Breathing

This is my 'go to' way of breathing when I want to decrease stress. There are multiple websites that go over this simple technique.

Here is the idea behind this way of breathing. You inhale for a shorter count (four) than holding (seven) or exhaling (eight). The shorter inhalation time gives your body, mind and emotions less power to feed their current (hijacked) way of being.

You hold for a count of seven. Breath brings in life. You want to give yourself time for that life to work on helping you (a count of seven).

You exhale for a count of eight. This gives your body, mind and emotions a longer time to release. You need to release to get out of soft or hard hijack.

When you begin 4-7-8 breathing, you may have to count faster. Your body is amped up and this type of regulating the breath can be hard to do. Your body is going against this

calming type of regulation. As your body, mind and emotions relax, your count can be slower and the volume of breath can increase.

I often go through six to ten cycles of 4-7-8 breathing. Then I let my body breathe for three minutes (in the beginning) and up to seven minutes (as hijack lessens). Then I again go back to six to ten cycles of 4-7-8 breathing. *Websites caution to not continually do 4-7-8 breathing. All of the other breathing techniques can be continually done.*

I don't know why the numbers of 4-7-8 have been agreed upon. They do what they're intended to do – to step you down from being in soft or hard hijack.

Breathing Technique #3: The Same Length Of Time For Inhaling, Holding and Exhaling

This way of breathing has been around for ages. You inhale for the same count as you hold the breath and as you exhale. You can find what number and pace of counting works for you.

In the beginning you may be counting to three on each of the three phases. As you become more relaxed the number can increase.

This was my 'go to' way of breathing for decades. I've switched to 4-7-8 in the last three years as my primary de-stressing way to breathe. I still use this same length count breathing at times.

Breathing Technique #4: Repeatedly Counting Up To Five While Exhaling

In this way of breathing you're not regulating the length of your inhalation or the length of your exhalation or how long your body holds the breath between inhalation and exhalation. You're not regulating where your breath is coming in or going out (through your nostrils, mouth or both). Simply put, you're letting your body breathe on its own.

Your job is to silently count each exhalation. The counting focuses your mind on exhalation; which is the letting go part of breathing. On the first breath, silently say 'one' while exhaling. On the second breath, silently say 'two' while exhaling. Do this up to the number five, then begin again at the number one. This gives your mind a job to do (and therefore you have less attention for the runaway thought train). You'll need more attention on counting only up to five compared to continuing to count higher and higher.

In Conclusion

A problem cannot be worked on until it's recognized. Soft hijack often goes unnoticed. When you're in soft or hard hijack, you're less present. The breathing techniques will influence you to become more present.

As your mind, emotions and body go from hijacked to more present, Spirit infuses more and more into the present moment. This will shift you from being hijacked by your thoughts, emotions and body, and bring you back to your true nature of peace, love, joy and compassion.

May all beings live free.

Footnotes:

- 1 Please read the article Being Triggered to learn more about amygdala hijack. [Click here](#) to read the article Being Triggered.
- 2 The article Perpetuate Vs. Process addresses abdominal breathing. At the end of the article is a footnote referring to six other articles that address abdominal breathing. [Click here](#) to read the Process Vs. Perpetuate article.